



# Academic Motivations and Academic Self-Efficacy of Nursing Students

## Hemşirelik Öğrencilerinin Akademik Motivasyonları ve Akademik Öz Yeterlikleri

Motivation and Self Efficacy

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### Özet

**Amaç:** Öğrenme sürecinde önemli rolleri olan akademik motivasyon ve akademik öz yeterlik akademik başarıyı artırarak, eğitim hedeflerinin gerçekleşmesine, dolayısıyla kaliteli hemşirelerin yetişmesine imkan sağlamaktadır. Bu çalışma hemşirelik öğrencilerinin akademik motivasyon ve akademik öz yeterlik düzeylerini belirlemek amacıyla yapılmıştır. **Gereç ve Yöntem:** Tanımlayıcı nitelikte bir araştırmadır. Araştırmaya bir hemşirelik okulunda birinci, ikinci, üçüncü ve dördüncü sınıfta okuyan 346 öğrenci dahil edilmiştir. Veri toplama aracı olarak Akademik Motivasyon Ölçeği ve Akademik Öz Yeterlik Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. **Bulgular:** Katılımcıların dışsal motivasyon toplam puan ortalamaları  $66.52 \pm 10.29$ , içsel motivasyon toplam puan ortalamaları ise  $64.60 \pm 10.75$  olarak bulunmuştur. Birinci sınıfların içsel motivasyon düzeyleri ikinci ve dördüncü sınıflardan yüksek, üçüncü sınıfların dışsal motivasyon düzeyleri ise diğer sınıflardaki öğrencilerden daha düşüktür. Öğrencilerin içsel motivasyon ve dışsal motivasyon düzeyleri ile akademik öz yeterlikleri arasında pozitif ilişki olduğu belirlenmiştir. **Tartışma:** Araştırmada akademik motivasyon yönünden sınıflar arasında fark olduğu bulunmuştur. Bu nedenle tüm sınıflarda akademik motivasyonun artışı sağlayacak psiko-egitimsel girişimlerin uygulanmasının öğrenmeye istekli, özgüvenli hemşirelerin yetişmesine katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.

### Anahtar Kelimeler

Motivasyon; Hemşirelik; Öğrenci; Öz yeterlik

### Abstract

**Aim:** Academic motivation and academic self-efficacy play important roles in the learning process. They increase academic achievement and the attainment of educational goals, thus providing opportunities in the training of qualified nurses. This study was conducted to determine nursing students' academic motivation and academic self-efficacy levels. **Material and Method:** This is a descriptive study. A total of 346 students who are attending a nursing school as either a first, second, third, or fourth year student have been accepted in the study. The Academic Motivation Scale and Academic Self-Efficacy Scale were used to collect data. **Results:** The total score of the participants for extrinsic motivation was  $66.52 \pm 10.29$ , and for intrinsic motivation  $64.60 \pm 10.75$ . It was observed that freshmen have a higher level of intrinsic motivation than the sophomores and the seniors; and the extrinsic motivation of the juniors is less than all the other classes. It was determined that there is a positive self-efficacy relationship between the intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation levels of the students. **Discussion:** In the study we determined that there is a difference between the classes in terms of academic motivation. For this reason psychoeducational interventions may be helpful in improving the academic motivation of the students, thus producing nurses who are confident and willing to learn.

### Keywords

Motivation; Nursing; Student; Self-Efficacy

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## Introduction

By acting as a guide for academic success, academic motivation and academic self-efficacy are two important factors in learning [1]. Bozanoğlu (2004) defines academic motivation as the energy required for the production of academic works [2]. To be motivated intrinsically or extrinsically is an important factor when students participate in learning activities [3]. Motivated students are more willing to engage in activities for learning and improving their success [4]. In her study of the factors that affect the academic performances of athletes, Gaston-Gayles (2004) stated that academic motivation is an important indicator of academic performance [5]. In their studies, Radi (2013) and Khalaila (2016) determined that among undergraduate nursing students, the higher their academic motivation, the higher their academic performance [6,7]. Kusrkar et al. (2013), in their study with medical students, also determined that there is a positive relationship between academic motivation and academic success [8].

One of the factors that affects academic success is academic self-efficacy. Academic self-efficacy consists of the individual's belief that they can reach their planned educational achievements [9] people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances. Following from Social Cognitive Theory, which states that learning happens by observation or by modeled behavior, therein lies the "self-efficacy" concept, described by Bandura as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" [10]. Bandura (1986) suggests that self-efficacy greatly influences the learning, performance, and motivation of humans [10]. Increased self-efficacy belief causes higher performance by increasing dedication and commitment [11]. Ferla et al. determined that academic self-efficacy is one of the most important indicators of academic success, and they stated that with the increase of self-efficacy, the individual's motivation increases too [12].

Recent studies focus on methods of evaluating the motivation of nursing students toward learning and their self-efficacy levels [13-15]. The aim of the nursing field is to better develop individual, family, and community health, to prevent disease, to provide better care for patients, and to relieve suffering [16]. To achieve this goal, it is important that students are eager to learn and have faith that they can succeed. Although many studies exist that focus on the academic motivation and academic self-efficacy of university students [17,18], studies concentrating on nursing students are few. This study has been conducted to evaluate the academic motivation and academic self-efficacy levels of nursing students.

## Material and Method

This is a descriptive study with the aim of determining the academic motivation and academic self-efficacy levels of nursing students.

### Study Population and Sample

The study was conducted in a four-year nursing school in Ankara during the 2015-2016 academic year. The school has 136 first year students, 119 second year students, 77 third year

students, and 86 fourth year students. Of those, 131 first year students, 98 second year students, 62 third year students, and 55 fourth year students who were in school when data gathering took place and were willing to participate were included in the study. A total of 346 nursing students participated in the study.

### Study Location

The nursing school in which we conducted the study has an integrated education system. Lessons are not grouped according to science disciplines; instead they are grouped in an integrated way into the basic medical sciences and nursing sciences and arranged into units of study. The units are composed of both concepts and systems. In the first year, the curriculum gives students the opportunity to learn more about themselves and about nursing. In the second and third year, normal and pathological conditions of the body's systems are integrated with nursing. In this integrated system, the fourth year is the intern program, consisting only of practical applications [19].

### Data Collection Tools

Data has been gathered using the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) and the Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES).

Academic Motivation Scale (AMS): The Turkish validity and reliability study of the AMS scale has been conducted by Karataş and Erden [3]. The AMS consists of 28 items of 7 subtypes under 3 different dimensions. There are three subtypes (external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation) of extrinsic motivation; three subtypes of intrinsic motivation (knowledge, accomplishment, stimulation); and amotivation. Four of the items in the AMS are related to amotivation, 12 to extrinsic motivation, and 12 to intrinsic motivation. The scoring is: "It does not fit" (1), "somewhat fits" (2,3), "moderately fits" (4), "strongly fits" (5,6), and "completely fits" (7) in the seven point Likert scale [3]. In this study the amotivation subtype was not used.

Academic Self-Efficacy Scale: This scale was developed by Jerusalem and Schwarzer (1981) to evaluate the academic self-efficacy levels of students. The single-dimension original scale consists of 7 items for self-efficacy. The scoring is: "It does not fit me" (1), "somewhat fits me" (2), "It fits me" (3), and "It completely fits me" (4) in the 4 point Likert scale. The Turkish version of the scale has been provided by Yilmaz et al. [3].

### Data Collection

After the necessary permits were obtained from the authorities, the aim of the study was explained to the students and their written consents were obtained. Researchers conducted face-to-face interviews with the students, read them the questions from the forms, and asked them to answer the questions. It took students approximately 12 to 15 minutes to fill out the data collection tools.

### Analysis of the Data

Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA) 15.0 was used for the statistical analysis of the data. For the descriptive statistics, mean  $\pm$  standard deviation, median, minimum, and maximum values have been used. Due to the abnormal distribution of data as a result of the analysis per-

formed by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the Kruskal-Wallis and Mann Whitney tests were used instead. Relationship between the data were examined using the Pearson Correlation test.

#### Ethical Aspects of the Study

Ethical consent from the ethical committee of the university and a written permit from the nursing school were obtained for the study. Students participating in the study were informed about the aim and purpose of the study and informed that their participation was voluntary. Participants were given assurance that their identities would not be disclosed to others.

#### Results

All the participants in the study are females. The total score for a dimension is the sum of the scores of its sub dimensions. The total score average (across all participants) for extrinsic motivation was  $66.52 \pm 10.29$  and the total score average for intrinsic motivation was  $64.60 \pm 10.75$  (Table 1).

Looking at the difference between the dimensions of the Academic Motivation Scale according to student year, a statistically meaningful difference exists between the "Extrinsic Motivation" dimension total score average and the "Introjected Regulation" and "Identified Regulation" sub dimension total score averages ( $p < 0.05$ ). Using paired comparisons to determine the origin of this meaningful difference, the "Extrinsic Motivation" total score average of the third year students ( $63.11 \pm 10.05$ ) was lower than that of students in the other years ( $\chi^2(k-w) = 9.953$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The "Introjected Regulation" total score average of the first year students ( $21.98 \pm 4.88$ ) was higher than that of the third year students ( $19.72 \pm 5.12$ ) and the fourth year students ( $21.83 \pm 4.88$ ) ( $\chi^2 = 10.272$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The "Identified Regulation" total score average of first year students ( $24.04 \pm 3.18$ ) was higher than that of the third year students ( $22.45 \pm 3.65$ ) ( $\chi^2(k-w) = 9.165$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 1).

A statistically meaningful difference between the "Intrinsic Motivation" total score average and the "Knowledge" and "Accomplishment" total score averages was observed ( $p < 0.05$ ). Using paired comparison to determine the origin of this meaningful

difference, the "Intrinsic Motivation" and "Accomplishment" total score averages of the first year students ( $22.65 \pm 3.71$ ) were higher than those of the second ( $21.09 \pm 3.58$ ) and third ( $21.09 \pm 3.58$ ) year students. However, the "Knowledge" total score average of first year students was higher ( $23.78 \pm 3.57$ ) than that of the second ( $22.39 \pm 4.16$ ) and fourth year students ( $22.67 \pm 5.02$ ) ( $\chi^2(k-w) = 9.894$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 1).

The "Academic Self-Efficacy" average score was  $19.54 \pm 2.73$ . There was no statistically meaningful difference between the "Academic Self-Efficacy" average scores of the nursing students according to their year ( $\chi^2 = 3.439$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) (Table 2).

A slight positive relationship between the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation scores of the students and their academic self-efficacy was observed ( $r = 0.300$ ,  $r = 0.294$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 3).

#### Discussion

In this study, extrinsic motivation levels of the third year students were found to be lower than those of the other students ( $p < 0.05$ ). In another study, Kūçūkosmanoğlu (2015) determined that among music teacher candidates, the level of extrinsic motivation of the fourth year students was lower than for the rest of the students [21]. With extrinsic motivation, the individual applies himself/herself to the learning process because of external factors such as gaining appreciation from other individuals or winning a prize [22,23]. The extrinsically-motivated individual finds it important not to be criticized by others such as the instructor, family, and friends [24]. As the students get to higher classes and as their knowledge and skill progress, the effect of the external factors in their motivation lessens.

Our study also established that "Introjected Regulation," which is a sub dimension of extrinsic motivation, was lower in the third and fourth year than in the first year. "Introjected Regulation" happens when the individual is interested in a behavior that is fulfilling their personal expectations or when they are trying to avoid penalty [3]. Our study results can be explained in this way: First year students are more willing to learn because when they come face to face with the lessons for the first time

they are afraid of failure. In a study conducted by Aktaş and Karabulut (2016) with 222 nursing students of a four-year nursing school of a university, a positive relationship between the students' perception of the clinical learning environment and their academic motivation was found [25]. Since third year students have more clinical internship hours compared to first and second year students and fourth year students have only intern classes, the low extrinsic motivation level of these classes should be investigated according to the variables related to this situation. In a study of "identified regulation," which is one of the extrinsic motivation subtypes, levels of the first year students were higher than those of third year students. Identified regulation happens when the individual, despite not performing a certain behavior, still values it because they like it [3].

Table 1. Academic motivation scale's subscale score averages by years

Academic Motivation Scale and Subscale's Averages	Mean $\pm$ SD Medium (Min-Max)				Statistical Analysis
	1.year (n=131)	2.year (n=98)	3.year (n=62)	4.year (n=55)	
Extrinsic Motivation					
External Regulation	21.72 $\pm$ 4.15 22(5-28)	22.04 $\pm$ 4.04 22.5(11-28)	20.93 $\pm$ 3.91 21(12-28)	22.10 $\pm$ 4.94 22(8-28)	$\chi^2(k-w) = 4.188$ $p = 0.242$
Introjected Regulation	21.98 $\pm$ 4.88 23(6-28)	21.41 $\pm$ 4.20 22(10-28)	19.72 $\pm$ 5.12 21(7-28)	21.83 $\pm$ 4.88 23(5-28)	$\chi^2(k-w) = 10.272$ $p = 0.016$
Identified Regulation	24.04 $\pm$ 3.18 24(13-28)	23.19 $\pm$ 3.55 24(10-28)	22.45 $\pm$ 3.65 23(14-28)	21.83 $\pm$ 4.88 23(5-28)	$\chi^2(k-w) = 9.165$ $p = 0.27$
Total Averages of Extrinsic Motivation	67.75 $\pm$ 9.57 70(37-84)	66.65 $\pm$ 9.69 68(37-84)	63.11 $\pm$ 10.05 65(42-83)	67.21 $\pm$ 12.49 70(33-84)	$\chi^2(k-w) = 9.953$ $p = 0.019$
Intrinsic Motivation					
Knowledge	23.78 $\pm$ 3.57 24(10-28)	22.39 $\pm$ 4.16 23(8-28)	22.14 $\pm$ 4.16 23(14-28)	22.67 $\pm$ 5.02 23(9-28)	$\chi^2(k-w) = 9.894$ $p = 0.019$
Accomplishment	22.65 $\pm$ 3.71 23(7-28)	21.09 $\pm$ 3.58 21.5(11-28)	21.25 $\pm$ 3.34 21(13-27)	21.94 $\pm$ 4.46 23(7-28)	$\chi^2(k-w) = 14.039$ $p = 0.003$
Stimulation	20.14 $\pm$ 4.63 21(6-28)	19.12 $\pm$ 4.61 19(8-28)	19.77 $\pm$ 3.91 20(7-28)	20.40 $\pm$ 4.97 20(6-28)	$\chi^2(k-w) = 4.438$ $p = 0.218$
Total Averages of Extrinsic Motivation	66.58 $\pm$ 10.03 68(23-84)	62.61 $\pm$ 10.74 65(34-83)	63.17 $\pm$ 9.14 64(37-83)	65.01 $\pm$ 13.24 68(22-84)	$\chi^2(k-w) = 11.634$ $p = 0.009$

Tablo 2. Academic self-efficacy scale's score averages by years

Academic self-efficacy scale	Mean ± SD Medium (Min-Max)				Statistical Analysis
	1. year (n=131)	2. year (n=98)	3. year (n=62)	4. year (n=55)	
Total averages	19.81±2.83 20(8-25)	19.44±2.85 20(14-26)	19.35±2.18 19(15-26)	19.25±2.84 19(14-28)	$\chi^2(k-w)=3.439$ $p=0.329$

Tablo 3. The correlation between intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and academic self-efficacy

		Intrinsic motivation	Extrinsic motivation
Academic self-efficacy	Pearson correlation	$r = .300$	$r = .294$
	p	$p = 0.001$	$p = 0.001$

$r$ =Correlation  $p < 0.05$

Although no statistically meaningful difference was determined between different classes, still it has been observed that final year students had slightly higher external regulation scores. Karataş and Erden (2012) state that “extrinsic regulation” happens when the individual is interested in a certain behavior in order to gain an external prize or to avoid penalty [3]. This situation can be explained by the position of the students. Since they are closer to graduation, their aim to graduate increases their motivation.

Our study found a difference between the intrinsic motivations of the different classes; the intrinsic motivation average score of the first year students was higher compared to the second and third year students. Guay et al. (2010) state that in intrinsic motivation, the individual is motivated by internal factors such as curiosity for learning and the pleasure of accomplishing something [26]. Eymur et al. (2011), in their study of the relation between the academic motivation and academic success of chemistry teacher candidates, found no difference in terms of intrinsic motivation scores between the classes [27]. Unlike their study, in our study intrinsic motivation of the first year students was higher. Being successful in the highly challenging university entrance exam and taking their first steps in the nursing profession are probably the reasons why they are eager to learn. The decrease in the intrinsic motivation levels among the second and third year students may be due to the complicated and complex nature of these lessons compared to the first year lessons.

In our study we observed that the intrinsic motivation subtype “knowledge” total score average was higher for first year students than for second and fourth year students. Intrinsic motivation “knowledge” consists of the individual’s desire to learn something for the sheer pleasure of learning [28]. Since first year students are just beginning nursing school they are learning new things and thus they are more eager to learn. Also, in the first year curriculum of the school in which we conducted our study, learning about human beings, learning about themselves, and learning about nursing are the subjects that the first year students focus on and these subjects are more delightful for the students.

In our study we observed that the intrinsic motivation subtype “accomplishment” total score average was higher for first year students than for second and third year students. Intrinsic motivation “accomplishment” consists of the individual’s desire to learn something for the pleasure of accomplishment [3].

Nursing students take the main courses for their profession in the second and third years. They are learning new information about their future profession, which contributes to their higher “accomplishment” scores. In a study conducted by Küçükosmanoğlu (2015), intrinsic motivation toward accomplishment was lower compared to other classes [21]. Similarly in our study, because final year students are near to completing their studies, their accomplishment scores are lower compared to other classes.

The self-efficacy total score averages of the students participating in this study are very close to the maximum possible score (min: 7, max: 28). On the other hand, there are no differences between the academic self-efficacy levels and their class levels. In a study by Durdukoca in which the teacher candidates were evaluated in terms of the factors that affect their academic self-efficacy, it was observed that sex and class level are effective factors [28]. In our study a positive relationship has been found between the academic self-efficacy of the students and their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation levels. In line with these results, in their study with teacher candidates Alemdağ et al. (2014) found a positive relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic motivation [18]. In addition, in their study with nursing students, Zhang et al. (2015) [30] found a positive meaningful relationship between self-efficacy and success motivation. In the literature, self-efficacy, that describes the belief that students can raise their motivation levels, would positively affect the learning process [1,7]. In this context, interventions aimed to raise self-efficacy levels may also help increase academic accomplishment.

**Conclusion**

In this study, intrinsic motivation levels of first year students were higher than in the second and fourth years. The extrinsic motivation levels of the third year students were lower than in the other years. We also found a positive relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation levels and students’ self-efficacy. By making students’ educational aims come true, academic motivation and academic self-efficacy contribute to the education of competent nurses. For this reason, psychoeducational interventions that increase academic motivation would help nursing students become confident nurses. Also, in the literature, many factors such as personal characteristics, parental attitude, school environment and friendship circles, student-teacher interactivity, and clinical application environment have been reported to affect academic motivation [25,31]. It is appropriate to evaluate the academic motivation of students according to these factors and to plan relevant interventions.

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**Conflict of interest**

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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